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WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?

BY REV. WM. HOWARD, OF ALA.

This question was originally addressed by our compassionate Redeemer to a poor, sick, helpless man, who had groaned under an incurable malady thirty and eight years. It is now proposed to the brave soldiers of the Southern Confederacy who, enfeebled by sickness and wounded in battle, are languishing in the Hospital, far from loved ones and all the comforts and endearments of home.

The question does not refer to your *bodily infirmities.* We have seen some of the suffering and distress which this unholy war has occasioned, and the sight has deeply affected our heart. We would, if in our power, speedily heal every wound and remove every disease.

And yet this language supposes that you are *sick.* Morally and religiously you are in a state of disorder and disease. Nothing but the most wilful blindness conceal from your view the fearful symptoms of this spiritual disease. Your soul has lost its appetite for proper and wholesome food. The Word of God, prayer,

communion with the Father of Spirits—these constitute the proper nourishment of the soul. But you have no relish for these things. The very sense of loathing which you feel when brought in contact with spiritual things, proves of itself, that your spiritual health is wholly gone.

Again, the restlessness and uneasiness of your soul is another indication of the existence and prevalence of spiritual disease. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." This declaration corresponds with your actual experience. You cannot rid yourself of conscious uneasiness, and dissatisfaction which spreads its infectious influence over all your pursuits and enjoyments. An irritation like this existing in the physical system, is at once taken as an indication of a derangement of the functions and of the presence of disease. Ought it not to be equally so in regard to the soul?

Sin is the infection, which is working destruction in your soul. The heart at enmity to God, the affections estranged from the fountain of life and joy, this is your desperate malady. It has spread itself throughout your spiritual system, and infected with its contaminating influence

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Pam
12m
#55

your every moral faculty. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

And O think of its dreadful *termination*. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Separation now from the love of God, and eternal banishment from his presence hereafter. It is a deadly malady, and tends infallibly to the everlasting destruction of its victim. But you say, "I feel that I am safe; I perceive no ground for alarm." But remember, insensibility to danger by no means disproves the fact of its existence. Look at your comrade who lies on the next cot—the victim of that slow but unfailing destroyer, consumption! How confidently he looks forward, even from the very brink of the grave, to the prospect of recovery! The disease works its way effectually, yet gradually and unperceived, until it has sapped the very vitals of the system, and though the course of preparation has been long, yet the body fails at last suddenly and unexpectedly into the tomb, and just as imperceptibly, yet no less surely, does that spiritual disease make progress, to

P42199

which your soul is subject. Be assured "the end of these things is death."

But blessed be God, this disease dreadful as it is, is *curable*. True the case is desperate when considered in reference to human aid. No outward appliances can reach the seat of the disease. No opiates you apply will be effectual in quieting your troubled concience, relieving it of its restlessness and anxiety and restoring it to perfect tranquility and peace. But "Is there," says God, "no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Yes, there is a balm, a great and tried physician, who says to every soul concious of this you disease and anxious to be cured "I will come and heal him."

Will you then, my dear friend, answer this question, practically now? Before put aside this tract, as Jesus asks you "Wilt thou be made whole?" will you honestly and prayerfully reply "I will?" You can do this without rising from your bed, by applying to this physician, and crying "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." He has provided a remedy of universal efficacy. It is sufficient to meet the necessities of the most desperate case! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth

from all sin." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." The woman who was a great and notorious "sinner," applied to him, and the burden of her sins was at once removed. Paul, a blasphemer and persecutor, guilty as he was, and desperate as was his condition, yet proved the efficacy of the sovereign remedy. None ever applied to Christ, submitted to his prescriptions and applied his remedy, who has not found effectual and permanent relief. "Virtue has gone out" of him sufficient to heal the deepest, to cleanse and purify the most inveterate wounds.

And he is just as willing as he is able to serve. We may be poor, but his services are offered without money and without price. We may be wholly unworthy of his favor; but he asks for nothing on our part, save a sense of our necessities. His offers are indiscriminate and free. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Now, then, my sick friend will you not make a personal application to this Divine Physician! Remember that the time of cure is limited and uncertain. "Now is

049193

the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Now the question is proposed "Wilt thou be made whole?" God grant that you may answer it at once by repairing to the footstool of mercy, there seeking deliverance from the power of your sins, that the progress of the plague which is hurrying your soul to eternal death may be stayed.

1. "And didst thou, Jesus, condescend,
To heal the sick, the lame, the blind,
And drive disease away?

2. Didst thou regard the beggar's cry,
And cause the blind to see?
Thou Son of David, hear—O, hear—
Have mercy, too, on me.

3. And didst thou pity mortal woe,
And sight and health restore?
O, pity, Lord, and save my soul,
Which needs thy mercy more.

4. Didst thou thy trembling servant raise,
When sinking in the wave?
I perish, Lord! O save my soul!
For thou alone canst save."

"*What must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?*"

"Life, *life, eternal life*," the most important of all things to the guilty, the lost, the dying. What must I do to inherit it?

"*What* must I do?" Something must be

done, and done soon, and done in earnest, or I perish. If I remain idle, inactive, unconcerned, a little longer, it may be too late.

"What must I do?" Not only is something to be done, but I must do it. God has wrought out a great salvation; I must receive it at the hand of God. No one else can do this for me. I must myself accept the profered gift, or never be saved.

What *must* I do?" There is a *necessity* in the case, urgent, pressing, inevitable. The work must be done, or I am undone, forever undone. Thinking, feeling intending, resolving—all this is not enough. What God directs must be done, and done as he directs, or I perish.

And now, do you ask in sincerity and earnestness, "*What must I do?*" By the grace of God, and according to his truth, I will tell you. You must admit and feel *that you are a sinner*, guilty, polluted, condemned, lost, and so dead in sins as to be in need of eternal life. You must realize that life is to be found *in Christ*. "In him is life," John 1: 4; and he "giveth life unto the world," John 6:33. And do you ask, "How shall I obtain it?" "He that *believeth on the Son* hath everlasting life," John 3:37. This, then, is what you must

do; you must believe on Christ. You must believe that he is the Saviour, the only Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost, willing to save all that will come to him: ready and waiting to save you, and to save you now.

And if you believe him thus to be a Saviour, and are willing to be saved by him, you will accept him as your Saviour, according to his word. You will repent: that is, you will cease to do evil, that you may learn of Christ to do well; sorrowing that you have ever broken God's commands, and resolving and praying that you may do so no more. You will believe: that is, you will receive all that Christ has said, and trust all that he has promised; and give up yourself, and all that you have and are, to him, for time and eternity. You will obey: that is, you will endeavor to do Christ's will, as the Bible declares it: and to do it sincerely, immediately, uniformly, prayerfully, faithfully, to the end of life, relying on the Holy Spirit for strength, and on the grace of God in Christ Jesus for acceptance at the final day. Do this, and you shall "inherit eternal life." Your sins shall be forgiven: your heart be renewed: your hope rest on the true foundation: though an outcast, you shall be restored: though deserving death, you shall inherit, through grace, eternal life.

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